

# Primary School Environment Trend, Class-Ratio and Head Teachers Overcrowded Classrooms Management Strategies in Northern Senatorial District of Ondo State, Nigeria

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## Abstract

Primary school Enrolment Trend, Class-Ratio and Head Teachers overcrowded classrooms management strategies in Northern Senatorial District of Ondo State, Nigeria was investigated.

The purpose of the study is to examine the current enrolment trend in public primary schools in northern senatorial District of Ondo State. Also, is to ascertain the class-ratio of primary school pupils in 2013-2014 academic session and to find out the management strategies adopted by the head teachers in solving overcrowded classrooms problems. Increase in pupils enrolment in some of the public primary schools in the state is a major concern to all stakeholders to education and it needs urgent attention. It is doubtful if the facilities available have been matched with the pupils enrolment especially in areas of classrooms availability. This study was considered using descriptive survey research design. A proportionate random sampling method was used to select 50 primary schools in the Senatorial District with total enrolment of 18,320 pupils and head teacher of each school in the district for the finding.

An instrument titled Enrolment, Class-Ratio and Management Strategies Questionnaire (ECRMS) designed by the researcher was used. Frequency counts and simple percentage were used to answer the research questions. Among several findings, it was revealed that actual number of classrooms available were not sufficient in the district and that 127 additional classrooms were urgently needed. It was also revealed that 41 primary schools out of the 50 sampled schools operate above normal class-ratio of 25/30 pupils recommended by UNESCO. It was indicated that 90% of the head teachers used negotiation strategy and 60% of them used reduction strategy in solving overcrowded classrooms problems.

Based on the findings recommendations are made which include; Government should increase education budgetary allocation from 85% in 2014 to 20% in 2015. Apart from government, other stake holder to education should be encouraged to fund education. Seminars and lectures on family planning and birth control should be legalized by government.

**Keywords:** Enrolment Trend, Class-Ratio, Overcrowded, Head Teacher, Management Strategies.

## INTRODUCTION

Primary education is the education received by children from age 6-11 and before secondary education (Federal Ministry of Education 2014). Primary education is very vital because it is the foundation of education at all levels. Ajayi and Adeosun (2004) affirmed that education cannot be an instrument per excellence for achieving national development where primary education is not effectively managed to accomplish its aims and objectives.

Objectives or goal of primary education are to:

- a) Include permanent literacy and numeracy and ability to communicate effectively.
- b) Lay a sound basis for scientific and reflective thinking.
- c) Give citizenship education as a basis for effective participation in and contribute to the life of the society.
- d) Mould the character and develop sound attitude and morals in the child.
- e) Develop in the child the ability to adapt the child's changing environment.
- f) Give the child opportunities for developing manipulative skills that will enable the child function effectively in the society.
- g) Provide the child with basic tools for further educational advancement (Federal ministry of Education 2014).

To achieve these stated goals by federal government, adequate facilities must be put in place. Facilities are very important factor at all levels of education most especially, primary level. Einola (2012) identified facilities as classrooms, hostel accommodation, laboratories, furniture, recreational equipment and others. Also Ogundipe (2003) opined that infrastructural facilities in terms of classrooms, libraries, laboratories, play field, school farm garden, have to be of appropriate in quality and quantity.

In Nigeria today and especially in Ondo State due to community and individual involvement in education population of pupils in primary schools have increased at high rate. Raheem (2003) reported that admission into primary school gallop annually in spite of the shortage of needed infrastructure in the school.

Also Philips (2011) reported that the number of overcrowded classes in New York was the largest in the last ten years. He said, overcrowded classroom is not only the problem of Pakistan but it has now become universal problem. According to him, Government Girls Secondary Schools in the district of Pescharrar Khyber Pukhtuhua have Pakistan, average number of students in most of the classrooms range from 70-120. Olaleye (2006) also expressed that additional classrooms are needed in most secondary schools of Oyo State. He said, 50-80 students were packed in one classroom. Shah and Inamullah (2012) found from their studies that overcrowded classes could have a direct impact on student learning.

A classroom is said to be overcrowded when the number of pupils or students exceed the optimum level. For example in Nigeria primary schools, when pupils in classroom exceed ratio of 30 pupils, there is overcrowded.

Abiodun (2012) said that the astronomical increase in the pupil enrolment seems to have led to congestion in many states of the federation. He said further, that Ekiti State appeared not to be left out of this problem. It could be therefore, that the falling standard of education in public schools today was a result of overcrowded classrooms. Adesina (1977) opined that one of the factors responsible for falling in quality of education in Nigeria is the prominence of overcrowded classes in many schools.

In Nigeria and particularly in Ondo State, numbers of factors could have been responsible for the enrolment increase in primary schools. These include health programme known as Abiye Health Programme, the programme has nearly reduced child and mortality during birth to zero level. The introduction of MEGA schools in the state and emphasized laid through radio and television jingles on the importance of Basic Education.

Management of overcrowded classrooms should be taken into consideration by school heads. Management involves planning, organizing, directing, coordinating, staffing and budgeting. In primary schools, head teachers should think on how to combine all these management elements so as to solve overcrowded problem in his schools.

Head teacher has two major roles to perform; Administrative role and Academic role. One of the major administrative role of the head teacher is to provide conducive environment for teaching and learning, therefore, he is at cross road of providing quality education to the large population with limited number of classes. Hence this study want to examine enrolment trends, class-size and management strategies used by head teachers in solving problems of recommended classroom.

### **The Purpose of the Study**

- a) To examine the current enrolment trend in public primary schools in North Senatorial district of Ondo State.
- b) To know the class-ratio of primary school pupils in North Senatorial district of Ondo State.
- c) To know the management strategies adopted by the head teachers in solving overcrowded classrooms problems in the District.

### **Research questions**

1. What is the current enrolment trend of primary schools' pupils in Northern Senatorial district of Ondo State?
2. What is the current class ratio of primary schools' pupils in the District?
3. What are management strategies used by the head teachers in the solving overcrowded classrooms problems in the District?

### **Research methodology**

This study adopted a descriptive research of the survey type. It was an attempt to investigate the current enrolment trend, current class ratio and management strategies used in solving overcrowded classrooms problems. Population of this study consisted of all primary schools head teachers and pupils in Northern Senatorial District of Ondo State.

There are 250 public primary schools which spread across the six local governments of the northern senatorial districts. The local governments include:

1. Akoko North East Local Government
2. Akoko North West Local Government
3. Akoko South East Local Government
4. Akoko South West Local Government
5. Owo Local Government
6. Ose Local Government

### Sample and Sampling Techniques

simple random sampling technique was used to select 3 local Governments area out of the six local governments in the District. Local Government selected are Akoko North East, Akoko South East, and Akoko South West.

Proportionate stratified random sampling technique was used to select 50 public primary schools out of 250 primary schools representing 25% primary schools in the district. 20 primary schools were selected from Akoko North East, 10 primary schools from Akoko South East and 20 primary Schools from Akoko South West.

### Instrument

A research instrument titled Enrolment, Class Ratio and Management strategies Questionnaire (ECRMSQ) developed by the researcher. The questionnaire has two parts: part one is to elicit information from the head teachers, the current enrolment and information of the class ratio in their schools. Part two was open ended questionnaire item designed to elicit information on the head teachers in tackling overcrowded classrooms crisis.

### Method of data analysis

Frequency counts and means scores were used to analyse all these research questions.

### Results

#### Research Question 1

What is the current enrolment trend of primary schools pupils in North Senatorial District of Ondo State?

**Table 1a (Akoko North East Enrolment Trend 2013-2014 Academic session)**

School	E	AA	NN
A	169	5	2
B	712	17	7
C	172	4	2
D	185	8	-
E	175	14	-
F	291	10	-
G	445	12	8
H	365	4	8
I	356	16	-
J	442	12	3
K	485	14	2
L	188	7	-
M	156	10	-
N	629	18	3
O	301	8	2
P	105	6	-
Q	298	9	1
R	101	10	-
S	155	6	-
T	100	4	-
TOTAL	5817	198	33

Source: Field work.

**Table 1b (Akoko South East Enrolment Trend 2013-2014 Academic Session)**

Schools	E	AA	NN
A	180	4	2
B	510	14	3
C	141	3	2
D	163	4	1
E	669	15	7
F	239	6	2
G	207	5	1
H	116	3	1
I	349	6	6
J	260	7	2
TOTAL	2834	67	27

Source: Field work.

**Table 1c (Akoko South west enrolment trend 2013-2014 Academic Session)**

Schools	E	AA	MN
A	334	8	3
B	398	10	3
C	772	17	9
D	446	13	2
E	642	17	4
F	700	20	3
G	500	10	3
H	310	8	2
I	383	8	5
J	493	12	4
K	349	10	2
L	758	21	4
M	603	17	3
N	591	16	4
O	315	9	1
P	287	7	3
Q	673	20	2
R	617	19	2
S	223	5	2
T	266	7	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>9669</b>	<b>258</b>	<b>63</b>

Source: field work

Key: E=Enrolment, AA= Actual Number of Classrooms, MN=Actual number of classrooms needed.

Table 1a-c

Show that Akoko South West has the highest enrolment of 9669 pupils, followed by Akoko North East with 5817 pupils. However, only ten public primary schools were sampled from the local government. Also table 1a showed that 198 classroom were available for use why 33 additional classroom are needed. Also in table 1b, it revealed that Akoko South East primary schools are in needed of additional 27 classroom with the present 67 available classrooms and lastly in table 1c, it was shown that Akoko South West have a total number of 258 classroom and additional 63 classrooms are still needed.

#### Research question 2

What is the current class-ratio of primary schools pupils in Northern Senatorial District of Ondo State?

**Table 2a (Class Ratio in Akoko North East in 2013-2014 Academic Session)**

School	E	AA	CR
A	169	5	34
B	712	17	42
C	172	4	43
D	185	8	26
E	175	14	15
F	291	10	29
G	445	12	37
H	363	4	90
I	356	16	22
J	442	12	37
K	485	14	35
L	188	7	27
M	156	10	16
N	629	18	35
O	301	8	38
P	105	6	18
Q	298	9	33
R	101	10	10
S	155	6	25
T	100	4	25

Source: Field work

**Table 2b (Class Ratio in Akoko South East in 2013-2014 Academic Session)**

Schools	E	AA	CR
A	180	4	45
B	510	14	36
C	141	3	47
D	163	4	41
E	669	15	45
F	239	6	40
G	207	5	41
H	116	3	39
I	239	6	40
J	265	7	37

Source: Field work

**Table 2c (Class Ratio in Akoko South West in 2013-2014 Academic Session)**

Schools	E	AA	CR
A	334	8	42
B	398	10	40
C	772	17	45
D	446	13	34
E	642	17	38
F	700	20	35
G	510	14	36
H	310	8	39
I	383	8	48
J	493	12	41
K	349	10	35
L	758	21	36
M	603	17	35
N	591	16	36
O	315	09	35
P	287	07	41
Q	673	20	34
R	617	19	32
S	223	5	47
T	266	7	38

Source: Field work

Key:E=Enrolment; AA=Actual number of classrooms available; CR=Class-Ratio

Table 2a-c shown the class-ratio in all the 50 primary schools. In table 2a, 10 out of 20 schools sampled class-ratio ranged between 33-90 pupils while the remaining 10 schools operate normal class-ratio. Also in table 2b, all schools sampled class-ratio ranged between 39-47 pupils and in table 2c all the sampled schools class-ratio ranged between 32-48 pupils.

### Research Question3

What are the management strategies used by the head teachers in solving overcrowded classrooms problem in Northern Senatorial District in Ondo State?

From the finding, the result shown that 45 head teachers out of the 50 head teachers given open ended questionnaire, that is 90% used negotiation strategy. Reduction strategy was also used by 60% of them. That is, embargo on new pupils admission into the school through transfer from other schools.

### Discussion

From the result on table 1a-c it was revealed that Akoko South West primary schools have the highest enrolment of 9669 pupils, Akoko North west pupils enrolment is 5817 pupils and Akoko South East have enrolment of 2834 pupils. However, only ten schools were sampled from the local government. The result also revealed that the actual number of classrooms available in the Northern Senatorial District for primary school pupils were insufficient. It was found out that 127 additional classrooms were urgently needed in the district so as to move the system forward. This is in consonance with Ogundipe (2003) that infrastructural facilities in terms of classrooms, laboratories, playground among other school be appropriate in quality and quantity. Overcrowded classrooms resulted to poor performance. Shortage of classrooms occurred as a result of increase in pupils enrolment. This problem of classroom shortage is well pronounced in public primary school as result of non-challant attitude of some stakeholders to education in terms of facilities provision. Government might not be able

to provide all the needed facilities in the schools. It might also be that some of the buildings built in some public primary schools might be of low quality in terms of material used.

Also in research question 2, table 2a-c revealed that out of the 50 schools sampled, one has class ratio of 90 pupils, while 17 of the schools class ratio ranged between 40-47, also 23 of the schools class-ratio ranged between 31-39 and 9 of the schools sampled did not exceed the class ratio. This implies that 41 primary schools out of 50 operate above normal class ratio of 25-30 pupils as recommended by UNESCO. This is in agreement with Abiodun (2012) that the astronomical increase in pupils' population seems to have led to congestion in primary schools in many state of the federation. He said the falling standard experienced today in public schools could have been because of overcrowded classes. One of the sampled schools has class-ratio of 90 pupils. This is in agreement with Philip (2011) that government girls secondary in the District of Pesiharra Khyber Pukhtukhua, Pakistan, average number of students in most of classrooms ranged between 70-120. This also collaborate Olaleye (2006) that 50-80 students were found in one classroom in secondary schools in Oyo State.

In this study, most of the schools with class-ratio of 40 and above were schools whose population were above 200 pupils. A situation where more than 40 pupils packed in one class, effective teaching and learning cannot take place.

Many factors might be responsible for the increase in pupils enrolment. It might be that many parents were not economically buoyant to send their children to good private schools where facilities are sufficient. The successful health programme put in place by Ondo state government which has reduced child death at birth to zero level. Hence, increase in school aged children. This is in consonance with Raheem (2003) that admission into primary schools gallops annually inspite of the shortage of needed infrastructure in the system.

## Conclusion

Based on the results of this study it is concluded that classrooms were not sufficient in primary schools in Northern Senatorial District of Ondo State, hence, congestion in schools.

## Recommendations

1. Government should increase education budgetary allocation from 8.5% in 2014 to 20% in 2015 so as to make money available for the system.
2. All stakeholders to education apart from government should be encouraged to fund education especially at primary school level.
3. Family planning birth control should be legalized so as to reduce the number of school aged children.
4. Seminar, conference should be organized for head teachers in primary schools on how to manage overcrowded classroom.
5. Government should build more classrooms and recruit more teachers.

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